

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council
www.southwillesboroughnewtown-cc.gov.uk
Minutes of the Additional Ordinary Council Meeting held on
18th March 2026

Additional Council Meeting March Minutes

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:00pm

In attendance Chair Cllr Sue Mullan (SM) Vice Chair Cllr Paul Bohill (PB) Cllr Malcolm Webb (MW) Cllr Lauren Corbett (LC) Cllr Steve Campkin (SC) Cllr Eric Parkinson (EP) Cllr David Mullan (DM)

Also in attendance, Sarah Evans Community Council Manager (SECCM) Peter New Neighbourhood Watch (PN) KCC Cllr Dean Burns

61/26 To Record and List Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Harris and Cllr Andy Hodges and approved

62/26 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

SC declared an OSI interest as Deputy Leader of Ashford Borough Council who are part of the company AIDC Ltd planning applicant for Newtown Works.

63/26 To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council March 2026 and sign

It was Proposed and Seconded that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting and the Chair signs them.

64/26 To receive the following planning application and agree a response.

- a) 2025 2242 29 Alfred Road Creation of a vehicular access with dropped kerb to the back garden, to create off road parking area.
- b) Any further planning applications received before the date of this meeting.

Resolved:- Agreed unanimously no objection to the application 2025 2242 29 Alfred Road, provided the grass verge is suitably paved to allow for regular vehicle crossing.

65/26 To receive and note the following planning applications and consultee responses to date

- c)) PA 2026 0229

Site Address
Newtown Railway Works, Newtown Road, Ashford, TN24 0PN
Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations (including upward extension) to the Locomotive Shed and Engine Shed buildings

- d) PA 2026 0171

Site Address
Newtown Railway Works, Newtown Road, Ashford, TN24 0PN
Proposal
Redevelopment of the site for a mixed use development comprising:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use, upward extension and external alterations to the Locomotive Shed building to provide 412 residential dwellings and commercial floorspace (577m²) (Use Class E);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use, upward extension and external alterations to the Engine Shed building to provide 20 residential dwellings and commercial floorspace (724m²) (Use Class E);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erection of four new buildings providing 383 residential dwellings, internal parking spaces and commercial floorspace (64m²) (Use Class E);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use of the Paint Shop building to provide commercial floorspace (108m²) (Use Class E);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use of the Acetylene Store (55m²) and Clock Tower (70m²) buildings to provide commercial floorspace (Use Class E) and/or community floorspace (Use Class F2), Plus associated infrastructure, landscaping, parking, servicing, access and other associated works.

e) To receive the statement of community engagement relating to SWANCC within the planning statement of applications related to Newtown Works and agree actions.

65/26 To consider the appointment of a Planning Consultant to assist the Council in responding effectively to the applications PA/2026/0171 and PA/2026/0229 at Newtown Works and agree.

Members had a lengthy and involved discussion on the planning application, also the previously circulated report was discussed and considered. Comments directly received to the Council from residents received were also presented to Members.

Resolved :- Proposed Seconded and agreed unanimously to the following

- a) The planning application was received and noted. Resident feedback on the planning application portal was discussed and considered, also resident feedback to the SWAN Office noting concerns on
 - i. Air quality, in relation the to works and extra vehicles on the road,
 - ii. The historic value of the listing buildings as “the epiphany of the Towns heritage and need to be kept as original,
 - iii. The site needs to have its own access and not over burden Newtown Road,
 - iv. The increase in residents will impact the William Harvey Hospital and the GPs and concerns that these services are increased as they are already overburdened.
- b) The planning application was received and noted.
- c) The statement of community engagement was reviewed it was agreed that the response to the application should include that at the Nov 25 meeting the plans were

not presented only discussed in a verbal report- as a change from Film and Media to Housing and the development of plans on this basis.

Reviewing the applications Council has the following concerns:-

1. The bridge at Crowbridge Road Cornering with Gladstone Road is too narrow for 2 vehicles to pass at present and there is no pedestrian footpath. The structural survey of the bridge results have not yet been forwarded to the Council by AIDC Ltd and its works have not been given a date that the Council is aware of. The risk of the bridge failing would be extremely serious.
2. The lack of suitable parking will have a very detrimental impact on Newtown and South Willesborough. It is unlikely that new residents will not have cars and multiple cars per household. It was noted KCC Highways had recommended an objection.
3. Cycling the proposal includes approximately 1000 cycle spaces, however there is no cycle path on Newtown Road and the Newtown Bridge offers no provision or space for Cycle lanes.
4. Clarification on the heights and elevations of the final locomotive sheds and the 4 new buildings. Including how these heights are calculated in relation to which reference points either in the previous plans with the multistorey carpark or other buildings in the area.
5. The suitability of the materials for the listed buildings on the locomotive sheds to ensure they are in character with the buildings.
6. The overall height and mass of the development will potentially obscure the view of the Listed Buildings from Newtown Road which are so important to the heritage and history of the area.
7. The 6 storeys of the buildings will be extremely high and will overlook the properties on Newtown itself and potentially impact their view and amenity.
8. The number of dwellings compared to parking provision and the size of the site is excessive. Too many properties for the size of the site.
9. Social Housing is very limited only 5 dwellings of the Townhouses from the entire site will be allocated to this, this is because the Site is Ashford Town Centre Zone and flatted developments do not have to provide social housing however this seems very low compared to the size and scope of the site.
10. Management of Pollution from the extra vehicles onto Newtown as well as the site itself.
11. These applications are much larger than the original plans, particularly for the locomotive sheds and to investigate this in relation to Ashford Local Plan policies adopted to 2030.
12. How will the S106 agreements which were in place with the previous applications be reviewed and the terms and details of these need to be considered.

13. Whilst the Monument and Memorial Plans are presented in the planning application as drafted by Mr Gerry Clarkson CBE they are not determined where they will be sited, this is a concern and it needs to be followed through as he proposed and purposed.
14. Sewage and Water works need early notification as per Policy SP6 Newtown Works of the Ashford Local plan adopted to 2030.
15. South Willesborough and Newtown is a place of true community spirit the design of the new site needs to provide an inclusive approach that offers equality to whole community.

The appointment of a Planning Consultant to assist the Council in responding effectively to the applications PA/2026/0171 and PA/2026/0229 at Newtown Works was agreed unanimously.

The quotation from Local Council Consultancy was reviewed and the introductory call on Friday 20th March was accepted and the indicative costs agreed with the Finance and General Purposes Committee delegated to review the final proposal after the introductory call and approve.

Actions SECCM 1) To submit officers report for this items and the 15 points members had raised in this meeting to the Planning Consultant and to carry out introductory call with Planning Consultant.

66/26 Meeting adjourned for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda. (This item will last no more than 15 minutes in total)

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm and opened to the Public.

Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator raised the following concerns

He had raised concerns at the Nov 25 with AIDC Ltd and not heard back he had followed this up twice directly with the Chair of AIDC Ltd but not heard back.

Height of Vehicles for Emergency Access

Volume of water for required is significant for an Emergency as well as day to day use. Following the recent fire at Earlswoth Road residents were left with very low pressure has this been pre planned within the development.

The expectations of the application that the new residents will walk or cycle and have no need for additional parking is delusional. Car club presented was very limited and would not be sufficient for demand.

Minimum access requirements for at height vehicles needed to be considered in the plan the roads need to be 4m wide minimum.

New estates at Conningbrook lakes, Chilmington Green and Singleton demonstrate narrowness of roads compared to vehicle sizes today

The proposed car parking management will need to be enforced continually how will this be ensured by the New Unitary Authority.

Strongly recommend a consultant to review these matters for a changing population, parking, access, fire safety and enforcement must be considered.

KCC Cllr had reviewed the plans, and having lived here for 30 years felt the proposal would be overwhelming on the community. has a dystopian futuristic look and feel and very self-contained. how would the below ground levels work and what would be their impact on both the development and the neighbouring properties. The limited social housing restricted who could have the benefit of living at the new development.

The meeting was reopened at 8:15pm

67/26 To receive an update report on the progress of a venue for the Community Skip and arrangements (verbal report).

Resolved Agreed unanimously that it was resolved in pursuance of the powers conferred by s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, the Council approves the expenditure of £660 plus vat (£792) to Ashford Demo Skips for the purposes of the community skip day.

To accept the offer from east Stour Primary School for the hire of the carpark for 4 hours at no charge. To submit to the School the Insurances and Risk Assessment.

68/26 To agree the draft risk assessment for the provisional Community Skip Day

Resolved:- Agreed unanimously to accept the risk assessment.

There being no further business to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 8:28pm

Signed Chair _____ Date _____

Appendix of Reports

To consider the appointment of a Planning Consultant to assist the Council in responding effectively to the applications PA/2026/0171 and PA/2026/0229 at Newtown Works.

Purpose of the Report

This report presents a factual overview of planning applications PA/2026/0171 and PA/2026/0229 at Newtown Works, including key policy, heritage, transport, and infrastructure considerations. It highlights areas where specialist planning advice would help the Council provide a fully informed response. The report is advisory in nature, focusing on facts and policy context, and does not make recommendations beyond seeking expert guidance.

1. To receive and note planning applications **PA/2026/0229** and **PA/2026/0171** relating to the **Newtown Works** site.
2. To consider the appointment of a Planning Consultant to assist the Council in responding effectively to the applications.
3. To consider the matters presented by the applications where specialist planning advice may be beneficial.

1) To receive and note planning applications PA/2026/0229 and PA/2026/0171 relating to the Newtown Works site.

The current applications are extensive and significant in terms of the **size, scale and scope of the development**, and the potential impact and change they may bring to both the Newtown Works site and to the communities of **South Willesborough and Newtown**.

The applications are complex, particularly in relation to the **conservation and adaptation of listed buildings**, and the scope for new development which must remain sympathetic to both the **heritage and historic character of the site** and the wider context of **Ashford Central**.

The Design and Access Statements present an ambitious approach to the redevelopment of the site. The proposals are informed by the **Ashford Local Plan 2030**, including site-specific policies **SP6 – Former Newtown Works** and **SP7 – Former Klondyke Site**, together with other relevant policies. The proposals must also be considered in the context of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**.

A summary of the proposed development is set out below

PA/2026/0171	
Site Address	
Newtown Railway Works, Newtown Road, Ashford, TN24 0PN	
Proposal	
Redevelopment of the site for a mixed use development comprising:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use, upward extension and external alterations to the Locomotive Shed building to provide 412 residential dwellings and commercial floorspace (577m²) (Use Class E); 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use, upward extension and external alterations to the Engine Shed building to provide 20 residential dwellings and commercial floorspace (724m²) (Use Class E); 	
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PA/2026/0229	
Site Address	
Newtown Railway Works, Newtown Road, Ashford, TN24 0PN	
Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations (including upward extension) to the Locomotive Shed and Engine Shed buildings	

To consider the appointment of a Planning Consultant to assist the Council in responding effectively to the applications

Given the size, scope and complexity of the planning applications, together with the significant potential change to the area and the historic and heritage value of the site, it is recommended that the Council seeks specialist planning advice in order to provide an informed and considered response.

The appointment of an independent Planning Consultant would assist the Council in reviewing the detailed documentation submitted as part of the applications and in identifying any key planning considerations relevant to the Parish Council.

Three quotations were sought; however, it proved challenging to identify consultants who were entirely independent of the project, as a number of planning consultants contacted had existing professional links either to the project team or to the architects involved in the scheme.

Quotation Request Specialist Advice to the Council to respond to Planning Application	To support the Council to consider and understand the application, Its impact on the area A meeting with Councillors in person
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	Agree a response to it –advising on the response or providing any written reports to support the Council to respond effectively
MG Goddard Peter Court Associates Tetlow king	Unable to quote
Alison Earley Independent Consultant	No response
Local Council Consultancy	Quotation awaited
Quotation Given	
Jarman Planning	£1300.00
Worked as a Planning Officer has years of experience in Local Government Planning departments. Recommended by Lenham Parish Council https://jarmanplanning.com/	

3 To consider the matters presented by the applications where specialist planning advice may be beneficial.

a) Delays to the Ashford Local Plan beyond 2030

The Ashford Local Plan is adopted to 2030, and the Council began consultation on the plan; however, the consultation has been delayed until October 2026. The applicant has responded to the consultation and noted that the plan will need to be updated, while referencing the current plan for certain policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for others.

Key policies (SP) include the siting of Newtown Works within the Ashford Town Centre Zone, which guide matters such as transport and affordable housing. Relevant site-specific policies include SP6 – Former Newtown Works and SP7 – Klondyke Works, which address development scale, previously agreed building heights (including former multistorey car parks), and S106 agreements in place.

It is important to understand where the application follows current policies and where NPPF updates are referenced. A Planning Consultant could provide expert advice on the application, including interpretation of the NPPF and local policies, to assist Councillors in forming an informed response.

.b) Size scale and scope of the applications

PA/2026/0171

Residential Component 3.6 The proposed development includes 815 residential units for market sale comprising of the following housing mix:

- 309no. one-bedroom units designed for two occupants
- 197no. two-bedroom units designed for three occupants
- 233no. two-bedroom units designed for four occupants
- 54no. three-bedroom units designed for four occupants (inc. 16 duplexes)
- 22no. townhouse

Commercial Component 3.7

The proposed development at Newtown Works comprises a number of elements, as set out below.

- Flexible commercial floorspace – 1,365m² (Use Class E) ➤ Redevelopment/new build - Engine Shed (724m²), Locomotive Workshop (W) (48m²), Locomotive Workshop (N) (217m²), and Locomotive Worksop (S) (312m²), and Block 1 (64m²).

- Flexible commercial space and/or Communal Floorspace – 233m² (Use Class E/F2) ➤ Change of Use - Paint Shop Building (108m²), Acetylene Building (55m²), Clock Tower (70m²).

Given the scale and complexity of the proposals, the Council could benefit from advice on the massing and overall scale of the development, and how this aligns with the NPPF, local policy, and the surrounding area, to support an informed response.

c) Design and Access Statements

The Design and Access Statements are comprehensive and cover all relevant application materials, including listed building consent. The proposals for the site are innovative and ambitious, both commercially and in encouraging changes in travel and car use.

The heights and scales of the development could be reviewed to understand their relationship with surrounding properties. It would be helpful for the Council to seek advice on the application, including how the proposals align with NPPF guidance for brownfield sites.

A consultant could assist in reviewing material considerations related to design and access, particularly regarding the historical and heritage significance of the site, including requirements for Grade 2 listed buildings.

d) Application has limited social or affordable housing.

Policy HOU1 – Affordable Housing

Newtown Works is within Ashford Town Zone A under the local ABC Council adopted plan. In this area, flatted development (including mixed flat and housing schemes) is not required to provide affordable housing.

For flatted development promoted as Build to Rent, consideration is given on a case-by-case basis, based on independently verified viability evidence, for its ability to deliver affordable private rented housing, up to a maximum of 20% of total dwellings. The majority of units in this application are flats, so there is no requirement for affordable housing for these units.

The planning statement does not reference Build to Rent options, which, if applied, could affect the approach to social housing provision.

Of the 22 townhouses, approximately 5 units would be liable for affordable housing under current policy.

It would be helpful for the Council to understand whether there is scope for additional affordable housing, or whether current policy is likely to prevail.

e) Transport and Parking see ES Vol 2 Appendix 7,1 transport on application.

The proposed development provides 563 residential parking spaces for 815 residential units, equating to an average of 0.69 spaces per dwelling, together with 19 additional non-residential spaces, giving 582 spaces in total across the site. Parking is distributed between the residential blocks (Blocks 1–4), spaces along the promenade, the locomotive workshop building, and along the new access road. The relatively low parking ratio reflects the site's town-centre location in Ashford, close to services and public transport including Ashford International railway station, where planning and transport policy typically supports reduced car parking provision to encourage sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and rail use. Parking management is proposed through a combination of allocated spaces for houses, visitor parking permits, and unallocated spaces available to residents, which the applicant argues will balance parking demand while limiting unnecessary car use in a highly accessible location.

The proposed development includes a car club as part of its Travel Plan, continuing a commitment from the existing planning permission (Condition 31). Discussions with Enterprise suggest that for the scale of the development, a fleet of 3–4 vehicles would be appropriate, funded initially by the developer, with members receiving free trial membership and credit. Car club vehicles could also be used by neighbouring areas,

increasing their viability and reducing local car ownership. Evidence from CoMoUK indicates that one car club vehicle can replace 20–30 private cars, leading to reduced parking demand and traffic, while encouraging residents to walk, cycle, and use public transport. Key benefits include lower parking requirements, cost savings for residents, support for electric vehicle use, improved social inclusion, and behavioural change towards sustainable travel. This measure aligns with sustainable transport objectives and supports the reduced parking provision proposed for the development.

The development proposes that all external parking spaces will comply with Building Regulations Part S and be provided as either active or passive electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces. This aligns with Kent County Council (KCC) parking standards (paragraph 70), which require a mix of active spaces (with chargers installed) and passive spaces (pre-wired for future installation) in communal residential and non-residential car parks. Where on-site demand cannot be met, KCC may seek a financial contribution towards a nearby charging hub, supported through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. ULEV spaces must be signed and marked for EV charging only, managed appropriately, and publicly accessible points should be registered with the National Chargepoint Registry. This approach ensures that the development is future-proofed for EV uptake, supports sustainable transport objectives, and facilitates accessible charging for residents, visitors, and disabled users.

The Local in local ABC council adopted plan policies TRA2 and SP4 sets out 1 space per residential unit for the zone A it is expected that all of this provision should be on site. Further policy review expands on visitor parking of 0.2 spaces residential and for commercial / non residential the table below is referred to

Policy TRA3 (b) - Parking Standards for Non Residential Development

Proposals for non-residential developments within the Borough shall provide parking facilities to at least the following parking standards:

A1 Food retail up to 1,000m ²	1 space per 18m ²
A1 Food retail of 1,000 m ² and over	1 space per 14m ²
A1 Non-food retail	1 space per 25m ²
A2 use class	1 space per 20m ²
A3 use class	1 space per 6m ² *
A4 use class	1 space per 10m ² *
A5 use class	1 space per 8m ² *
B1 office use (up to 500m ²)	1 space per 20m ²
B1 office use (up to 2,500m ²)	1 space per 25m ²
B1 office use (2,500m ² and over)	1 space per 30m ²
B1 High tech / research/light industrial	1 space per 35m ²
B2 use class	1 space per 50m ²
B8 Storage and distribution	1 space per 110m ²
B8 Wholesale Trade	1 space per 35m ²
Hotels	1 space per bedroom

These use classes are also required to deliver 1 space per 2 staff in addition to the standard set out above.

All floorspace references in this table refer to gross external floorspace.

Continued

The application seeks to offset the parking by looking at the approach to usership of vehicles

The Kent Design Guide – Parking Standards (current supplementary guidance) makes it clear that parking should not dominate development, should be well-integrated with design, and must reflect local circumstances such as accessibility to other transport modes:

- The guidance says that parking should be designed as part of the overall development, and that inappropriate or excessive parking that detracts from the public realm should be avoided — particularly in high-density developments where the environment and design quality are critical.
- It also requires that Travel Plans accompany developments that generate significant movement, to encourage sustainable travel measures (e.g., car clubs, walking, cycling), and these measures are factored into overall parking strategies

Given the complexity of the proposals and the Council's interest in parking and congestion matters, it would be helpful to seek expert advice on the application. This would assist the Council in reviewing compliance with policy, guidance, and practical considerations, including the points raised in the KCC Highways consultee response

f) Travel and Access Summary

Cycling

The application proposes 944 cycle parking spaces for residents and 70 spaces for visitors, supporting the Council's objectives for improved cycling infrastructure and local connectivity. Walking and cycling access is promoted across the site, including:

- Links to the town centre and surrounding areas
- Access to bus services
- Access to rail services
- Alternatives to car ownership, including a car club on site

Bus

The application does not currently propose a bus stop extension. It would be helpful for the Council to clarify whether the applicant has any responsibility to provide this, particularly given the reduced car ownership and parking approach.

Rail

The application proposes measures to encourage commuter travel by rail. The potential return of the international railway facility could support the development's transport connectivity, and the Council may wish to consider commenting in line with the Bring the Magic Back campaign.

Millstream Bridge (Crowbridge Road)

Policy SP6 requires the applicant to review the humpback bridge. The application includes arrangements, but KCC Highways has raised concerns. The Council may wish to seek advice on reviewing these arrangements to ensure they meet safety and accessibility requirements.

Pedestrian Footways

Pedestrian footways approaching the Clocktower, Newtown Road, and Old Millstream Bridge have been highlighted in the application. KCC Highways has noted concerns, and the Council may wish to seek advice to review these areas for safe pedestrian and cycling access

g) Infrastructure

Table 13.12 Population coming forward

Unit Type	Number	Factor	Population
1B2P	309	1.4	417
2B3P	197	1.9	370
2B4P	233	2.2	503
3B duplex / town house	76	2.4	186
TOTAL	815	1.8	1476

The **Socioeconomic report** details the expected population resulting from the application and the potential implications for community services and facilities, including play areas, meeting spaces, open spaces, health and wellness services, medical and dental care, nurseries, and schools. The report also considers **cumulative effects** of planning proposals within Ashford and the provisions needed to support growth.

h) Play Space

It would be helpful for the Council to clarify what play space provisions are required and how they are addressed in the planning application.

i) Roads

None of the internal roads are recommended for adoption by KCC and will need to be maintained by the applicant together with parking enforcement. It would help the Council to know how this would be managed and who would be responsible in the long term

j) Monument and Memorial

The application outlines the Monument and Memorial exactly as the designs received to Council by Mr Gerry Clarkson CBE, at present the location for it is not confirmed within the plan.

k) Community Space

is referenced within the planning statement with reference to SWANCC and the Council raising requirements for community space. This is covered in separate agenda item report.

Conclusion: Challenges in Reviewing the Application

By hiring a consultant with expert knowledge and experience, the Council would be well-positioned to review these matters, including the conservation of listed buildings under the second application, and provide a **fully informed and accurate response**. This would also support effective communication of residents' views within the Council's role as a **Statutory Consultee**.

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Sarah Evans
Community Council Manager
12.3.26